

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 168000
ORIGIN NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 /024 R

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DRAFTED BY: NEA:AGLASPIE
APPROVED BY:NEA AGLASPIE
S/S-O:SVALERGA

-----007072 022326Z /75

O 022307Z JUL 78 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PARIS NIACT IMMEDIATE

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FOLLOWING REPEAT BEIRUT 3672 ACTION SECSTATE INFO SITREP COLLECTIVE
USCINCEUR USNMR SHAPE CINCUSNAVEUR CINCUSAFE COMSICHTFLT CTF SIX
ZERO CTF 61 CTF 62 CTG 60.2 FICEURLANT FOSIF ROTA DIA CINCUSAREUR
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES DATED JUL 02:

QTE:LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BEIRUT 3672

JERUSALEM AND TEL AVIV PASS ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PERP, MOPS, LE, SY
SUBJECT: BEIRUT SITREP - 2130 HRS JULY 2

REF: BEIRUT 3670 (DTG 021013Z JUL 78)

1. SUMMARY. FIGHTING RESUMED IN BEIRUT LATE AFTERNOON
JULY 2 BETWEEN SYRIAN ADF AND BOTH PHALANGE AND NATIONAL
LIBERAL PARTY MILITIAS. FIGHTING BEGAN IN DOWNTOWN PORT
AREA, NEAR PHALANGE PARTY HEADQUARTERS, SOON SPREAD TO
AIN AR REMANNEH AND BECAME GENERALIZED ABOUT 1800. NLP
HEADQUARTERS WAS HIT AND IS PRESENTLY BURNING. DANY
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CHAMOUN IS THREATENING TO CALL UPON THE ISRAELIS FOR
DIRECT ASSISTANCE. ACCORDING TO PHALANGE POLITICAL BUREAU
MEMBER KARIM PAKRADOUNI, CEASEFIRE WAS ARRANGED AT 2030
LOCAL. AS OF 2130, HOWEVER, INTENSIVE FIRING CONTINUES AND
SOME DIRECT GROUND FIGHTING HAS DEVELOPED IN CENTRAL
ASHRAFIEH. END SUMMARY.

2. FIGHTING RESUMES. APPROXIMATELY AT MIDDAY JULY 2, AFTER A QUIET MORNING, TWO INCIDENTS REPORTEDLY OCCURED, WHICH SPARKED RENEWED FIGHTING. 1) FOUR SYRIAN SOLDIERS WERE KIDNAPPED BY PHALANGIST ELEMENTS IN PORT AREA NEAR LEBANESE FRONT "UNIFIED MILITARY COMMAND" HEADQUARTERS. SYRIANS DEMANDED THEIR IMMEDIATE RETURN, BUT THEY WERE NOT RELEASED. 2) THERE WAS AN INCIDENT IN THE SAME GENERAL AREA BETWEEN PHALANGIST MILITIAS AND SYRIANS AT A ROADBLOCK. SYRIANS RETALIATED BY FIRING AT PHALANGIST POSITIONS IN BOURG - PORT AREA. PHALANGISTS BECAME CONVINCED THAT THEIR NATIONAL (POLITICAL) HEADQUARTERS WAS UNDER ATTACK, WHICH SYRIANS DENIED.

3. FIGHTING SPREADS. HEAVY ARTILLERY FIRE BEGAN HITTING AIN AR REMANNEH AREA ABOUT 1700, OBSERVED FROM AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE AT YARZE. AS OF 1930 A SHELL OR ROCKET WAS HITTING AREA EVERY TWO SECONDS. BY 200, FIGHTING BY INDIRECT FIRE APPEARED TO BE GENERALIZED THROUGHOUT EAST BEIRUT.

4. NLP HEADQUARTERS ATTACKED. NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY (POLITICAL) HEADQUARTERS IN EASTERN ASHRAFIEH CAME UNDER HEAVY BOMBARDMENT FROM HIGH EXPLOSIVES AND ROCKETS AND CAUGHT FIRE AT ABOUT 2000 LOCAL. ACCORDING TO DANY CHAMOUN, HIS FATHER CAMILLE CHAMOUN IS IN THE BASEMENT OF AN ADJOINING BUILDING ALONG WITH SOME 40 PARTY

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WORKERS.

5. AMBASSADOR'S ACTIVITIES. DURING THE AFTERNOON AND EVENING, AMBASSADOR HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS, PRESIDENT SARKIS, DANY CHAMOUN AND PIERRE GEMAYEL. BOUTROS SAID AT ABOUT 2000 LOCAL THAT A CEASEFIRE HAD BEEN AGREED UPON BUT AS OF 2200 FIRING WAS STILL GOING ON. SARKIS DESCRIBED SITUATION AS "VERY BAD" AND IMPLIED THAT HE WAS IN TOUCH WITH SYRIANS. DANY CHAMOUN SAID HE DID NOT KNOW HOW FIGHTING HAD STARTED TOADY, WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT CHANCES FOR A CEASEFIRE, AND SAID HE IS CONSIDERING ASKING FOR ISRAELI ASSISTNACE. DANY SAID, "WE HAVE LOST FIFTY PEOPLE ALREADY". PIERRE GEMAYEL (WHO WAS WITH SARKIS AT THE PALACE), AFTER REPEATING HIS USUAL LITANY ABOUT INTERNATIONAL CONSPIRACY, SAID HE HAD GIVEN CEASE-FIRE ORDER TO ALL PHALANGE UNITS.

6. CEASEFIRE? ACCORDING TO PAKRADOUNI, SPEAKING AT 2030, A CEASEFIRE HAD BEEN ARRANGED, TO TAKE EFFECT IMMEDIATELY. HE THOUGHT HOWEVER IT WOULD TAKE 30 TO 60 MINUTES TO COME INTO BEING. AT 2130 HE REPORTED THAT DIRECT FIGHTING HAD ERUPTED ON THE GROUND IN THE

SASSINE AREA (CENTRAL ASHRAFIEH). HE FELT THAT,
PARTICULARLY IF A POSITION ON THE GROUND HELD BY
EITHER SIDE, FELL TO THE OTHER, FIGHTING WOULD GET
OUT OF CONTROL REGARDLESS OF CEASEFIRE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SITREP, COMBAT OPERATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 jul 1978
Decapton Date: 01 jan 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE168000
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA:AGLASPIE
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780273-0771
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197807101/aaaadhrc.tel
Line Count: 121
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3a50c06a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BEIRUT 3670
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1851287
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BEIRUT SITREP - 2130 HRS JULY 2
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, MOPS, LE, SY
To: PARIS
Type: TE
vdkgvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3a50c06a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014